History

A retrospective, if you will. Our Home Planet has a little history behind it, and here I'll do my best to show you how the comic you're currently reading came to be. Shall we?

Last updated December 11, 2016. This'll most likely be the final update to this history for a while. This isn't an exhaustive art history, just a rundown of the comics. At some point I may flesh this out a bit more to include some info on Like Magic. Until then, this section can be considered complete.

Class dismissed!

Dimensional Nomad (circa 1998 - 2001)

Believe it or not, at one point in time I actually wanted to write a Magical Girl Story. Dimensional Nomad was the tale of Rika (you might recognize that name), a young lady who worked at an electronics company developing a brand new video game system that would revolutionize the market: a VR system that interfaces directly with the brain. Rika was your typical desk jockey, doing mostly paperwork, along with her coworker and best friend, Mai (sound familiar?). DN was the first real story for these two characters. Back then, Mai was a bit of an airhead and functioned mostly as comic relief. As I continued writing, I decided that this wasn't a direction that I really wanted to take her character, and so I ditched it in favor of a more spaced-out personality. This, of course, wouldn't last through subsequent stories, but it's important to note that she has indeed changed! Rika and Mai have always shared an awkward homoerotic tension, and this story was no exception to the rule, full of lots of bizarre innuendo and touchy-feely shenanigans. One thing leads to another, a slight mishap with a prototype unit, and BANG, they—along with a male coworker, Nen (who hasn't seen the light of day in ages)—are caught in an electrical disturbance that transports them to an alternate dimension. Rika ends up running into people in this new world that she has seen in her dreams... only the real versions of these people are far less enchanting and mysterious than their dream counterparts. Along the way, she discovers some interesting things about herself and her role as the (you guessed it) "Dimensional Nomad." This comic marks the first appearance of Lanogan, on the cover and on pages one and two, who will later show up in subsequent comics.

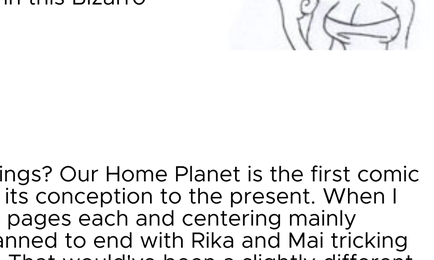
I was a little bit too ambitious with this story, especially since it was my first real attempt at a comic. I wrote the script for around fifty pages right out of the bag, and before long realized that at the pace I was going, there was no fathomable way for the art to keep up with the writing. I wanted to do too much, and my skill as an artist was certainly not up to the par of the details I was planning. The pacing is a little screwy, and the panel order is rather confusing on several pages. You'll also notice that awful habit that a lot of artists influenced by Japanese styles pick up, which is the inclusion of the Japanese alphabet in their work, even (especially) when it's completely inappropriate. I'm not Japanese, and this comic doesn't take place in Japan. There, I said it! Now you can't! HAH!

Only 8 pages of this comic ever made it online, though many more sketched pages are tucked into a manila folder somewhere secret. These pages are not inked. For all the talking about it I did at the time, there really wasn't all that much to show for it. After much heartache and soul-searching, I gave up on DN and retired it to the status of Failed Comic. Live and learn! However, to its credit, DN gave rise to some situations and dialogues that would pop up in OHP a few years later (are you a bad enough dude to know which?). In that sense, these first 8 pages could be seen as the true prototype for OHP. You'll probably notice a lot of similarities, since I quite shamelessly recycled several bits into OHP.

Cover - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8

Nomad Hearts (circa Spring 2001)

Not too long after DN's demise, something new reared its ugly head. I still really wanted to do a comic, and had grown rather fond of many of the characters planned for use in DN. Thus, Nomad Hearts was born. The title was obviously a little uninspired, and the comic wasn't much better. This one followed the antics of Anya, a lusty gal with a reputation for easily getting carried away with herself. The brief 5-page attempt at a comic chronicled her unrequited love of Lanogan, followed by the passionate embrace of her accidental savior, Rika. It sort of degenerated everything I was aiming for with DN into a gag comic (and a bad one at that), so in retrospect it's a little embarrassing. Perhaps good for a chuckle or two, Nomad Hearts' only saving grace was that it opened up a few doors as to where I wanted to take Rika's character later down the road. I don't have a whole lot to say about NH, since there's no plot to speak of. Besides, how much can you say about five pages? And it looks like that Japanese text came back, like a case of Japanophile herpes. Whoops!



One thing you might notice concerning character design in these older comics is the prominence of the eye-lashes. They're pretty big in Dimensional Nomad, but they're downright enormous in Nomad Hearts. I was originally toying with the idea of having the eyelashes double as whiskers, since the characters are all animal-like. In earlier drawings I gave these lashes to both guys and girls, which had the obvious side effect of making the men look a bit femmy. But only one gender having these appendages is just as strange, as you can undoubtedly see. Like so many great ideas before it, this one was quickly laid to rest.

Mai is still kind of a numbskull in this comic, though not quite as much of a space case as in DN. Both Anya and Lanogan were originally villains designed for use in Dimensional Nomad. Why are they friendly with Rika and Mai, now? Beats me.

1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5

One-shots and Mini-Comics (circa Winter 2000 - Summer 2001)

But I didn't stop there, no sir. Even while I was working on Nomad Hearts, I had other ideas flitting around in my head. I wanted to draw comics, damnit! Nothing was gonna stop me, not even a lack of inspiration. In fact, I even made a strip about my lack of motivational forces. Wow!

Of course, very briefly I entertained the idea of maybe starting a gaming comic. Because no-one's ever done that before, right? Right. My career in video game humor would have been pretty short anyway, because a) I don't have the scratch to buy current games regularly, and b) most recent games don't hold my interest long enough for me to cull humor from them. Bummer! I did try two different approaches at gaming humor, though...

Point Blank 3: Scoring Enigma Edition
An Awful Phantasy Star Online Comic That People Seem to Like: 1 - 2 - 3

Game Humor was not my calling. In lieu of actual comics, I also created character dialogues on previous incarnations of my site. Talking heads, as it were. Rika and Mai would discuss various goings on with the site, and I would occasionally pop in and interact with them, as well. It was like Howard & Nester (& Nester), but not quite as marketable. I haven't figured out a good way to show an example of one of these, yet.

But look! CG! Well, at least, in some of them. I'll admit, it's pretty elementary level stuff (just the line tool and the airbrush), used mostly as an afterthought to organize the work in a more presentable fashion, but a step in the right direction. This is around the time when I started really getting into oekaki, which as you may or may not know, led directly into the creation of Our Home Planet. And yes, Rika and Anya are still friends in this Bizarro Universe. You can imagine your own reasons why.

Our Home Planet (2002 - present)

Originally titled "(comic)"... have you figured out yet that I'm usually not very good at naming things? Our Home Planet is the first comic I've successfully developed into a full-fledged read. The evolution of this story is constant, from its conception to the present. When I first started OHP, it was originally intended as another gag comic, with stories lasting around 10 pages each and centering mainly around the peculiar situations in the lives of Rika and Mai. In fact, the massage parlor bit was planned to end with Rika and Mai tricking one of the D'bos into eating the other one (not the fun way), and using the diversion to escape. That would've been a slightly different story!

However, after around 8 pages in the massage parlor, I noticed that I was on to something with these alien characters I'd created, and didn't want to just leave them in the lurch. So, after some reconsideration and character refinement, I sat down and wrote a new story, which is what you're reading today. OHP is the story of Rika and Mai, two rather normal Earthling girls, who one night have the fortunate/unfortunate pleasure of meeting real live space pirates. Before long, they're neck deep in intergalactic mayhem, especially when bounty hunters come calling to try and score two of the biggest bounties in the known universe. This comic has, by far, been the most enjoyable thing I've ever created. Over the past fifteen years, it's grown with me in ways that I couldn't even really begin to explain.

Rather than my heavy-handed approach to narrative that I was attempting in DN, OHP's story is much more whimsical and pliable in terms of which directions I'm able to take it at any given moment. The characters' personalities have finally solidified, and as result, I'm finally comfortable writing dialogue for them. It only took, what, five years?

As you might have noticed, some familiar faces are returning to the stage as the story chugs along. Veterans up to this point include Rika, Mai, Lanogan, Anya, Queen (originally an oekaki creation), and Lone (a protagonist from an old animation storyboard I made in college). Pepito was the lucky recipient of Mai's less-than-smart qualities; I think the personality ended up working out much better with Pepito than it did with Mai, anyway.

This concludes our little trip down memory lane!